

Message Text

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PAGE 01 GEORGE 00727 162032Z

10

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-10 OMB-01 EB-07 AID-05 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 TRSE-00 SAM-01 /079 W

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R 161900Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1219

INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS

AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

C O N F I D E N T I A L GEORGETOWN 0727

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR GY VE

SUBJ: VENEZUELA COURTING GUYANA--INVITES PM BURNHAM FOR
OFFICIAL VISIT

REF: A. GEORGETOWN A-048 (NOTAL) B. ARA/CAR/NC MEMO TO
ASST SECY ROGERS, APRIL 29

SUMMARY: GUYANA FONMIN RAMPHAL REPORTS LITTLE
CONCRETE AROSE IN GOG ECON DEVEL MINISTER HOYTE'S
RECENT TALKS IN CARACAS, BUT GOV IS NOW PRESSING
INVITATION ON PM BURNHAM TO MAKE OFFICIAL VISIT,
WITH VAGUE INTIMATIONS OF DESIRE TO SETTLE
TERRITORIAL DISPUTE. GOG WELCOMES IDEA OF VISIT
BUT IS SKEPTICAL OF GOV INTENTIONS ON DISPUTE
SETTLEMENT.

1. WHEN I SAW FONMIN RAMPHAL MAY 15, I ASKED HIM
IF HE WERE FREE TO GIVE ME A RUNDOWN ON WHAT TOOK
PLACE DURING THE RECENT VISIT OF ECON DEVEL MINISTER
HOYTE TO CARACAS (REF A). I ASKED PECIFICALLY
IF THERE HAD BEEN ANY DISCUSSION OF A DEAL INVOLVING
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PAGE 02 GEORGE 00727 162032Z

TRADE-OFF OF GUYANESE BAUXITE/ALUMINA FOR VENEZUELAN

OIL (HAVING IN MIND REF B). RAMPHAL SAID HOYTE WAS RATHER DISAPPOINTED AT THE LACK OF ANYTHING CONCRETE IN HIS DISCUSSIONS WITH THE VENEZUELANS. WHEN MY EXPRESSION APPARENTLY INDICATED SOME SURPRISE AT THIS REMARK, RAMPHAL SAID ALL THE ARTICLES IN THE GEORGETOWN PRESS WHICH GAVE GLOWING ACCOUNTS OF THE FUTURE BENEFITS TO FLOW FROM THIS VISIT HAD BEEN PLANTED BY VENEZUELAN AMBASSADOR MARQUEZ GARCIA. RAOPHAL WENT ON TO SAY THAT THE GOG WAS A LITTLE ANNOYED WITH MARQUEZ OVER THIS EPISODE.

2. RAMPHAL THEN WENT ON TO SAY THAT, MORE SIGNIFICANTLY, AMBASSADOR MARQUEZ HAS JUST RECENTLY RENEWED AN INVITATION FROM PRESIDENT PEREZ TO PM BURNHAM TO MAKE AN OFFICIAL VISIT TO VENEZUELA DURING JUNE. THIS, HE SAID, WAS A FOLLOW-UP TO AN INITIAL MENTION OF THE POSSIBILITY DURING RAMPHAL'S VISIT TO CARACAS LAST YEAR. RAMPHAL ADDED THAT HE HAS GOTTEN THE IMPRESSION THAT PEREZ AND HIS NEW FONMIN ESCOVAR ARE ANXIOUS TO ESTABLISH PERSONAL CONTACT WITH BURNHAM BEFORE RAMPHAL LEAVES HIS PRESENT POST. IN AN ASIDE, RAMPHAL SAID HE THOUGHT THE VENEZUELANS FEARED BURNHAM AND THE GOG MIGHT BECOME MORE RADICAL AND LESS APPROACHABLE BY SEMI-DEVELOPED COUNTRIES SUCH AS VENEZUELA AFTER RAMPHAL'S DEPARTURE.

3. RAMPHAL SAID HE AND BURNHAM WERE DISPOSED IN PRINCIPLE TO ACCEPT THE INVITATION, BUT BURNHAM IS INSISTING THAT AN AGENDA BE CAREFULLY PREPARED BEFOREHAND SO THAT EACH SIDE WILL HAVE A CLEAR IDEA OF WHAT IS TO ISSUE FROM THE MEETING. FURTHERMORE, HE SAID BURNHAM WAS DISINCLINED TO GO TO CARACAS, AND SUGGESTED THAT THE TWO MEN MEET ON THE VENEZUELAN RESORT ISLAND MARGARITA, WHICH WAS APPARENTLY AGREEABLE TO PEREZ. RAMPHAL SAID FONMIN ESCOVAR HAD MADE A VAGUE SWEEPING SUGGESTION TO GOG AMBASSADOR INSANALLY TO THE EFFECT THAT THE VENEZUELANS WANTED TO FIND A FORMULA FOR DEALING WITH THE TERRITORIAL DISPUTE OVER ESSEQUIBO. RAMPHAL SAID SIMILAR REMARKS HAD BEEN MADE BY PRESIDENT PEREZ TO HIM. HOWEVER, BOTH

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 GEORGE 00727 162032Z

HE AND BURNHAM ARE SKEPTICAL AS TO HOW PRESENT GOV COULD COMPROMISE THEIR CLAIM EVEN THOUGH PEREZ HAS ATTEMPTED TO GIVE IMPRESSION THAT ALL HE NEEDS IS QUOTE SOME FACE SAVING GESTURE UNQUOTE ON THE PART OF GUYANA. IT IS FOR THIS REASON HE AND BURNHAM ARE PROCEEDING CAUTIOUSLY IN THE PREPARATORY DISCUSSIONS.

4. RAMPHAL SAID GOV FONMIN ESCOVAR IS ASKING

URGENTLY TO MEET WITH RAMPHAL WHILE LATTER IS IN NEW YORK NEXT WEEK MAKING PREPARATIONS FOR UNSC DEBATE ON NAMIBIA. RAMPHAL SAID IF BECAUSE OF PRESSURE OF OASGA SCHEDULE IT APPEARED TOO DIFFICULT FOR ESCOVAR TO BREAK AWAY, RAMPHAL WOULD BE WILLING TO GO TO WASHINGTON TO MEET HIM. OBJECTIVE OF MEETING WOULD BE TO WORK OUT ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE STATE VISIT.

5. I REMARKED TO RAMPHAL THAT THE VERY FACT THAT THE VENEZUELANS WERE WILLING TO INVITE BURNHAM SEEMED TO ME AN ENCOURAGING SIGN THAT GOV WAS PREPARED TO PUT BORDER DISPUTE TO REST PERMANENTLY. I SAID IT WOULD BE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT FOR THEM TO RESUSCITATE THE DISPUTE OR EVEN TO CONTINUE TO USE IT AS A BAR GO GOG ADMISSION TO THE OAS ONCE THEY HAD ACCORDED BURNHAM THE PANACHE OF A STATE VISIT. RAMPHAL AGREED BUT SAID THAT HE AND BURNHAM STILL FELT IT ADVISABLE FOR GUYANA TO TEST CAREFULLY EXACTLY WHAT GOV HAD IN MIND AS REGARDS HANDLING OF THE DISPUTE.

6. COMMENT: OBVIOUSLY THE BORDER DISPUTE WILL NOT BE THE ONLY TOPIC FOR DISCUSSION IN CONNECTION WITH A STATE VISIT. THERE ARE A NUMBER OF ECONOMIC MATTERS ON WHICH GOG WOULD BE INTERESTED IN SEEKING GOV COOPERATION, RANGING FROM AN EXTENSION OF THE USDOLS 15 MILLION CONCESSIONARY LOAN GRANTED IN 1974 TO SOME KIND OF BAUXITE/ALUMINUM TRADE. THE CONTINUED RATHER HIGH PROFILE ACTIVITIES OF VENEZUELAN AMBASSADOR IN GEORGETOWN WOULD SEEM TO INDICATE THAT THE GOV, AT LEAST FOR THE NEAR FUTURE, ATTACHES CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE TO

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PAGE 04 GEORGE 00727 162032Z

IMPROVING ITS RELATIONS WITH GUYANA.
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